

SECTION IX – FIRE SAFETY STANDARDS

FOR IN-HOME CHILD CARE

Health and Safety Requirements

Note: The fire safety standards for in-home childcare settings were drafted within the confines of the state and local fire safety standards. They are not to be interpreted to provide for a level of fire safety that would meet nationally recognized standards, nor does it mean that it would provide a level of fire safety that would meet adopted fire safety standards for other occupancies in Idaho. Questions are so worded that a negative answer will indicate an unsatisfactory condition.

1. DEFINITIONS

- a. "Day Care" means care and supervision provided for compensation during part of a twenty-four (24) hour day, for a child or children not related by blood or marriage to the person or persons providing the care, in a place other than the child's or children's own home or homes.
- b. "Child" means a person less than twelve (12) years of age.
- c. "Family Day Care Home" means a home, place, or facility providing day care for six (6) or fewer children. Note: Family or day care homes are not required to have a license or fire inspection.

2. GENERAL EXITING REQUIREMENTS

- a. Are the required exits located as such that an unobstructed path outside the building to a public way or area of refuge provided?
- b. Are exit doors operable from the inside without the use of a key or any special knowledge or effort?
- c. Are there at least two exits located a distance apart not less than one-half the diagonal dimension of the building or portion used for day care and the travel distance between exits do not exceed 75 feet?
- d. Are the required exits not less than 32 inches of clear exit width and not less than six (6) feet, eight (8) inches in height? Exception: Sliding patio doors will be accepted as a required second exit in Family and Group Day Care Facilities in home settings only.
- e. Are sleeping rooms provided with at least one (1) emergency egress window having at least a minimum single net clear opening of 5.7 square feet, minimum width 20 inches, and maximum finished sill height not over 44 inches?

Note: An approved exit door is acceptable in lieu of egress windows. Also, an approved piece of furniture or platform, if anchored in place, can be approved to sit in front of a window if the sill height is over 44 inches.

All escape or rescue windows shall have a minimum net clear openable area of 5.7 square feet. The minimum net clear openable height dimension shall be 24 inches. The minimum net clear openable width dimension shall be 20 inches.

When windows are provided as a means of escape or rescue, they shall have a finished sill height of not more than 44 inches above the floor.

When checking your windows to see if they conform to the requirements for escape or rescue windows, remember that the 24-inch height requirement and 20-inch width requirement are minimum requirements. A window that is 24 inches in height and 20 inches in width does not qualify as an escape or rescue window because it will not have a minimum net clear openable area of 5.7 square feet.

These minimum height and width requirements, plus the minimum openable area are necessary to allow fire fighters with full protective clothing and air packs, to enter the building. The finished sill height of not more than 44 inches above the floor allows fire fighters to enter the building without falling a distance that would cause injury.

- f. Are approved egress windows from sleeping areas operative from the inside without the use of separate tools?
- g. Where children are located on a story below the level of the exit discharge (basement), are there at least two exits provided, one of which is directly to the outside?
- h. Day care is prohibited on any upper floor beyond the first floor.

Exception: Day care is permitted at the second floor level provided that the building is protected throughout by the automatic fire sprinkler system and has two exit doors directly from the second floor level to the outside.

Is the facility in compliance?

3. FIRE EXTINGUISHER REQUIRED

Is there at least one 2A-10BC fire extinguisher within seventy-five (75) feet travel distance to any portion of the home? It must be serviced and tagged annually.

4. TELEPHONE REQUIRED

An operable telephone is required within the facility with the phone number "911" posted. Is there an operable telephone on the premises?

5. SMOKE DETECTOR REQUIRED

A smoke detector is required on all floors of the home. A smoke detector shall be located in the hall immediately outside of any room used for sleeping purposes. All of the detectors shall be audible in the sleeping room. If they are not, the detectors shall be inter-connected.

6. STAFF TO CHILD RATIOS

- a. Total number of children on site
- b. Number of children 0 to 18 months of age
- c. Number of children 18 months of age to 5 years of age
- d. Number of children over 5 years of age
- e. Total number of staff on site

7. ADDITIONAL FIRE CODE RECOMMENDATIONS

- a. The occupant load or required square footage per person is not an issue in the average home. To determine the square footage, multiply the length of the building by its width, excluding the outside walls. The occupant load is then determined by dividing the square footage by 35.
- b. All heating equipment and chimneys shall be maintained in a proper working condition (filters cleaned monthly and oil or gas furnaces serviced annually). At no time is an oil or gas unvented heater allowed.
- c. No wood stove or heaters shall be installed that would block an exit if the unit malfunctions. Any heat producing equipment is recommended to have a guard to prevent burn injuries.
- d. Flammable liquid storage is not allowed within the home. Storage of up to ten gallons is allowed in the garage.
- e. All electrical appliances, fixtures, panel boxes, receptacle outlets, switches and wiring shall be maintained in good condition. ALL circuits in the electrical panel shall be labeled. THE FIRE DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDS THAT ALL UNUSED ELECTRICAL OUTLETS BE PROVIDED WITH COVERS.
- f. The building shall be free of excess accumulation of readily combustible materials such as paper, oily rags, and other waste on the interior and accumulation of dry weeds, leaves, etc., on the exterior.

Adapted from Idaho State Fire Marshal Inspection Form for Day Care Centers